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IN

A SOD=HOUSE.

BY

ELIHU BOWLES.

I am human, and whatever touches
humanity, touches me. — Terence.

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A SOD=HOUSE.

33
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Chapter I.

FROM BOY TO MAN.

Ned Sanders when a cheerful boy
Knew well a farm in Illinois ;
By living in a country home,
He learned at tender age to roam
O'er meadows, fields, through forests wide,
And swamps where water-lilies hide.
He early learned the moral art
Of letting Nature tune his heart.
To him, her works were churches, schools,
More valuable than printed rules.

When all the wintry days were gone,
And grass again grew on the lawn,
He'd go with his companion Rover,
To play in meadows lined with clover.
He learned the use of bees and flowers,
As well as trees and April showers.
The river flowing through the wood,
He'd learned, was made to do much good :

To quench the thirst of lowing herds,
To furnish ponds for water birds,
To wash the fleece of dusty sheep,
To pile the drift-wood in a heap,
To wet the roots of many trees,
To water swarms of honey bees,
To run the mill that grinds the wheat,
To give the people fish to eat.

Ned often went beyond the mill
To spend the day with cousin Will,
By swimming streams or catching fish,
Or putting berries in a dish,
By gath'ring flowers and climbing trees,
Or robbing nests of bumble bees.

In winter time their greatest fun
Was calling dog and loading gun,
Then off to have a rabbit chase,
Or shooting squirrels, or sometimes trace
The raccoon to his hiding place.

In school the same as when at play,
Those cousins often led the way.
If Ned should fail to spell a word,—
'Twas seldom, though, such thing occurred—
Then Will was apt to pass toward head
And leave behind some faces red.

When problems were too hard for Will,
Then Ned was glad to show his skill.
And so it was in history,
In grammar and geography ;
When one would fail, 'twas then the two
Could do the work and prove it true.

When time had changed those boys to men,
And common schools were needless, then
To college they had planned to go,
To give their minds a chance to grow.
Their parents helped by word and deed,
And to their sons had guaranteed
The cash to pay for tickets, books,
And clothes to aid their manly looks,—
To pay tuition, car-fare, rents,
And then allow for incidents.

Those cousins talked and dreamed of joys,
In college with a host of boys,
Of happy days with new-made friends
In lyceum halls where knowledge blends
With laughter, social chats, and breaks
The selfishness that business makes.
They talked about astronomy,
Of Latin and geometry,
Of college prizes they would win,—
When all done, then life's work begin.

Alas ! hard luck befell poor Ned ;
His plans all failed ; his hopes all fled.
'Twas gradually, his father's debts
Had grown till larger than assets,
Then dashed as eagles come for prey
And took the property for pay,—
Took hogs and horses, sheep and cows,
And wagons, buggies, reapers, plows.
It even took their fertile farms,
With virtue-making country charms.

'Twas hard for father, mother, son,
To start back where they'd first begun ;
With nothing but their hearts and hands
And now denied the low-price lands.
But then the thought that grieved them sore,
Was : Judgment for two thousand more !

The energies of brain and brawn,
Of parents now are mostly gone.
Gone where ? you say ; look at those fields
And see the energies there sealed
In meadows, lawns, and evergreens,
In house and fences, barn and shed,—
They hoped to will it all to Ned.

When time had come for Will to start
Away, he learned 'twas hard to part
With father, mother, cousins, too,
With uncles, aunts, and friends he knew.
He ne'er had been away a week,
And all that day could scarcely speak
Without tears rolling down his cheek.
And then it made him feel so sad
To think his friendly cousin had
To be deprived of college life,
And take instead the poor man's strife.

With heavy heart and downcast looks,
Ned helped Will pack his clothes and books
In trunks, then load them in the hack.

He hitched up Uncle's Grey and Black,
Took Will to train, then drove them back.
Although in miles 'twas only five,
They had a long and lonesome drive.

They saw no light within the past:
Misfortune's cruel cloud had cast
A shadow o'er the innocent joys
That blessed their lives when playful boys.
Misfortune also had betrayed
Them in their plans so gladly made.

And when that silent, painful ride
Was o'er, and trunks were placed inside
The depot, then Will said, "Good-by!"
Too sad for words, Ned's tearful eye
And quivering lip was his reply.
He started home and watched the train
Till out of sight beyond the plain.
His feelings, sobs and tears ran wild;
He cried as never since a child.

Chapter II.

FLEEING FROM CARE.

Ned stayed at Uncle's—tried to rest—
Till Monday morn, then started west
In search of land, a level tract,
Still subject to the "Homestead Act."

The puffing engine whistling loud;
The coaches packed with sleepy crowd;
The roadside lined with prancing teams;
The many peaceful, wooded streams;
All sizes and all kinds of towns,
With people white, and black, and brown;
The rabbits in the hazel thicket;
Conductor's manly, "Ticket, Ticket!"

The porter's threadbare monotone ;
The lonesome poodle none would own ;
The worn-out tourist's midnight groan ;—
These rapid changing scenes were best
To give Ned's mind a needed rest,—
Prepare him for the booming West.

When far out on the Western plain,
The time had come to leave the train.
Three thousand feet above the sea,
Without a single shrub or tree,
He found a magic western town
With naught but prairie all around.
Old buffalo-grass yet lined the street ;
The pieces of sidewalks failed to meet ;
The buildings all looked very cheap,
And few had paint to make them keep ;
But they were made of new-sawed pine,
And bright as any paint, did shine.

Of business signs the main display
Was, "Boarding by the Week or Day,"
"Livery Stable," "Feed and Hay,"
"Town Lots for Sale by Smith and James,"
"Homestead Lands and Timber Claims,"
"Land Agency, J. Connelly,"
"Locating Made a Specialty,"
"Land Papers Drawn by J. A. Keen,"
"For Contest Lawyer, See L. Dean."

Before that town was six months old,
Two hundred fifty lots were sold.
For sale, was twice as many more,
By agents numbering a score.

Ned hired a locator and team,
And started for the Beaver stream,
A small creek thirty miles away.
'Twas on a very chilly day ;
The wind was sharp ; the sky was clear.
In all that ride no soul was near ;

But many living things were passed
On that bleak plain where buffalo-grass
Was thin, and scarce four inches high,—
The color like the crust of pie.

Jackrabbits hid 'neath thistles brown ;
The prairie dogs had made a town ;
Snowbirds and striped squirrels were thick ;
Wild ducks were swimming in the creek ;
A rabbit claimed a badger hole ;
A coyote skulked behind a knoll ;
And at the foot of Beaver slope,
Were many playful antelope.

A cattle ranch was reached that night ;
To Ned, it seemed a unique sight.
'Twas near a naked, stony bluff ;
The hills on ev'ry side were rough ;
A cottonwood sapling stood alone,
Close by a small house made of stone ;
The milkhouse, tunneled in the hill,
Sent forth a little crystal rill,
To water many cattle near,
And wet the garden all the year.

The cattle sheds were 'gainst a bank,
Corrals were made of stone and plank ;
Near by them stood the water tank.
The hay was made of sorghum, rye,
And prairie grass from lowlands nigh.

Though you may go from coast to coast,
You'll seldom find a kinder host
Than those two men stayed with that night,
Warmed by his fire and shared his light.
They sat down at a table spread
With cabbage, turnips, beef and bread,—
With milk and butter, eggs, potatoes—
With syrup, beans, and canned tomatoes.

Though it was rather homely fare,
'Tis seldom better anywhere.
But that was not the better part :
'Twas "Welcome," coming from the heart.

The husband and the wife that night
Were entertained with great delight ;
And seemed as though some friends had come
To cheer their isolated home.

In weather fair, in snow or rain,
The ranchman on the Western plain
Counts any evening truly blest,
Perchance a trav'ler be his guest.
And when you leave you find he took
No mortgage on your pocket-book.

When night had passed, they started on ;
But ere the day was half way gone,
They found a claim that suited Ned,
Unhitched the team, took lunch and fed.

The "U. S. Land Office" was in
The booming town of Prairie Lynn.
'Twas eighty miles by stage and rail ;
And Ned now feared that he should fail
To get his papers on that claim,—
He feared some one would choose the same.
Not so, he had his papers on
That land before two days were gone.

The Homestead and the Timber Act
Had caused the Office to be packed
With men in search of western land,—
E'en arid plains were in demand.

At supper Ned heard tales of care
That many people had to bear.
A gray-haired man from Iowa
Said : "Renting there has failed to pay.

Last year I mortgaged all my mules,
My milch-cows and my farming tools ;
Besides, I kept my boys from school.
Crops failed ; my property all went
To pay the mortgage for the rent."

Of those who thronged the town that night,
All seemed to be cosmopolite ;
And all, home-seeking, travel-worn,
From friends and native country torn.

An ex-slave came from Tennessee ;
A sailor boy from Germany ;
A maid from Pennsylvania came
To teach a school and take a claim.
A swain from Sweden's wintry climes
Had crossed the ocean seven times.
The sails he raised ; the ropes he plied ;
And all for this : To get one ride.

The youthful couple lately wed ;
Young men with hope, and heart, and head ;
The college student seeking health ;
The business man in search of wealth ;
The many brawny men of toil,
Who mix the sunbeams with the soil,
And by the work of hand and head,
Convert a part to snow-white bread ;—
All these, all these become a mass,
A sturdy, nature-conquering class.

Chapter III.

BUILDING ON THE CLAIM.

When Ned at last secured a claim,
A sod-house then he made.
The tools he used were saw and hammer,
Breaking plow and spade.
He cut sod twenty inches long
And fourteen inches wide,
And then began the building twelve
By fourteen feet inside.

He made the walls 'most eight feet high
And thirty inches thick ;
Except he put no mortar in,
He laid it up like brick.
Instead of rafters for the roof,
Three timbers lengthwise laid,
Held up that roof of boards and dirt,—
Three tons it would have weighed.

He hauled some "native lime" and sand
From near the Beaver bluff,
And plastered all the inside walls ;
So they would not be rough,
But make them smooth and clean and white,
Instead of dirty black,
And also keep the winter wind
From whistling through the cracks.

Then Ned could not afford to buy
The lumber for a floor,
But whispered to himself, "I'll walk
On dirt a year or more."
He filed his spade till it was sharp

Enough to shave a clod,
And then one inch below the surface
Shaved away the sod.

And near one corner, in the wall,
He drove a wooden pin,
And nailed to it a small boot-box
To put his dishes in.
He bought a stove, but made a table,
Bedstead, bench, and stool ;
And all the wood-work showed it ne'er
Had touched a planing tool.

Chapter IV.

THE FIRST NIGHT ALONE.

With happiness and honest pride
For home that was his own,
Ned to his little sod-house came
Prepared to live alone.
But when smooth night-cloud hid the east
And quickly passed to west,
A heavy, lonesome feeling then
As quickly filled his breast.

And
The watchdog growled,
The coyotes howled,
The heavens scowled
That night.

Not e'en a wagon road was near ;
No neighbor's light was seen ;
And Ned was parted from his friends—
A thousand miles between.
He ne'er had stayed alone o'er night ;
No wonder boyhood fears,
With ev'rything so strange and new,
Should enter manhood years,—

When
The watchdog growled,
The coyotes howled,
The heavens scowled
That night.

When morning broke, a shining sun
And clear, blue sky were seen ;
And dewdrops shone like diamonds, on
The level prairies green.
The striped squirrels were rearing up
And skipping o'er the ground ;
The yellow-breasted meadow larks.
Were singing all around ;—

After
The watchdog growled,
The coyotes howled,
The heavens scowled
That night.

How foolishly, how foolishly
He felt when morning came !
He found imagination had
Been more than half to blame.
So through the day, though working hard,
He scarce could keep from sleeping,
And all the time a tired, languid
Feeling o'er him creeping ;
Because
The watchdog growled,
The coyotes howled,
The heavens scowled
That night.

Chapter V.

LEARNING TO COOK.

By practice mixed with common sense
And many comic incidents,
Ned dearly earned a simple weal—
Could quickly set a simple meal.
At first 'twas bad, amazement grew ;
He learned how little that he knew.
Then came the bach'lor's starving times,
Which pinched his stomach, saved his dimes.
And then a second effort made
To learn the kitchen girl's trade.
The soup-beans boiled within the pot,
While hen eggs fried in skillet hot ;
Dry bread was cooked with canned tomatoes ;
And meat was fried with cold potatoes ;
The teapot boiled, a thirst to quench ;
When at the plow, the monkey-wrench
He'd throw and kill a timid hare,
Then fry it brown with greatest care.
One evening Ned found our quite well
That rice was wonderful to swell :
He filled half full a small tin pan,
Then poured in water from a can,
Then put it on the stove to boil,
Then stopped to rest from weary toil.
The water muttered rather low ;
The rice was cooking somewhat slow ;
But rising up like warm yeast dough,
And soon above the can did show
Like a hay-shock covered o'er with snow.
He dipped a part out with a spoon ;
Again, again, he dipped ; but soon
'Twould rise up like a rising moon.

And supper gave its share of fun :
That rice was scorched, but not quite done.
When tired of pancakes ev'ry day,
When tired of going two miles away
To get a neighbor's wife to bake,
Ned thought a better course he'd take.
He knew one man who baked light bread,
And did it well, so people said.
"I, too, will learn to bake," thought he ;
"I'll save my dimes for meat and tea."
His neighbor bach'lor gave advice ;
Ned read the yeast box over twice ;
Then went to work to make the dough ;
He stirred in flour till it would flow
About like sorghum in the snow ;
Then set it on the stove to rise,
Till it was twice its former size.
But suddenly a voice, "Hello !
Say, Sanders, don't you want to go
With us and have a coyote chase
Along the draws on Murphy's place?"
Away they went with mingling sounds
Of men, of hoofs, of anxious hounds.
A few short hours, Ned reached his door.
His spirits then began to lower ;
A sadder countenance he wore :
That dough had streamed the cook stove o'er ;
It stood in puddles on the floor ;
What little stayed inside the pan,
 "Had sunk to rise no more."

Chapter VI.

THE FIRST SUMMER.

The first year Ned was on his claim
It underwent a change,
Affecting in a serious way
A neighbor's cattle range.
For weeks in spring and summer
He was busy, wet and dry,
A-plowing sod for sorghum, corn,
For winter wheat and rye.
Near by his house he dug a well—
No spring was on his land—
'Twas eighty feet; and half the way
Was curbed to hold the sand.
He earned some cash by carrying
Surveyor's flag and chain,
By hunting corner stones worn out
By wind, by frost and rain.
So Ned was never idle, but
Was always hard at work.
He hoped to found a happy home;
And dared not, could not shirk.

Chapter VII.

ON THE RAILROAD.

The men who settle in the West,
On land that's unimproved,
Soon find expenses greater than
They figured when they moved.
The little incomes all are gone,
By which more cash to win.
The money keeps on going out,
But ceases coming in.
Ned found it so, and went to work
A hundred miles away,
And hired to work with railroad men—
Three twenty-five per day.
Then 'twas
Down the grade and turn the scraper,
In the pit and fill the scraper,
Up the grade and dump the scraper,—
Round and round,
Up and down,
Through the weary, weary hours.

He went to work as at the plow,
With honesty and zeal.
Another workman cursed him when
Ned's team was near his heel.
But after noon the team was tired ;
And Ned was tired, too ;
As tardy minutes came and went,
They both more tired grew.
Of all the days Ned ever worked,
That seemed the longest one ;
It seemed as if some Joshua
Had meddled with the sun ;—

But 'twas
Down the grade and turn the scraper,
In the pit and fill the scraper,
Up the grade and dump the scraper,—
Round and round,
Up and down,
Through the weary, weary hours.

Next morn at five the surly boss
Aroused the railroad camp.
Ned slept within his wagon, though
The air was cool and damp.
The muscles of his arms and legs
Were somewhat stiff and sore ;
His back had tallied ev'ry time
He turned the scraper o'er.
With breakfast done, he hurried out
And quickly hooked the traces.
At work he found the greatest pressure
On the sorest places.

But 'twas
Down the grade and turn the scraper,
In the pit and fill the scraper,
Up the grade and dump the scraper,—
Round and round,
Up and down,
Through the weary, weary hours.

The days were short ; and when from camp
To work they all had gone,
The frost would often glisten by
The light of fading dawn.
One hour for noon, and then when all
Were back to camp at night,—
The only remnant of the day,
A narrow streak of light.
So through the many sunny days,
When air was still and clear,
Through wind and dust, through cloud and
With chilly atmosphere, [fog

It was
Down the grade and turn the scraper,
In the pit and fill the scraper,
Up the grade and dump the scraper,—
 Round and round,
 Up and down,
Through the weary, weary hours.

When winter snows had fallen, and
When railroad work was done,
Ned started for his homestead
 With the money dearly won,—
A sum not large, although enough
 To live the winter through,
To buy the grain to feed his team
 And feed a pig or two.
So Ned was glad that he had gone
 To work with railroad men;
Yet hoping never, never more
 To have to go again;
 For 'twas
Down the grade and turn the scraper,
In the pit and fill the scraper,
Up the grade and dump the scraper,—
 Round and round,
 Up and down,
Through the weary, weary hours.

Chapter VIII.

AT HOME AGAIN.

“Ned Sanders is at home again,”—
This simple message went
From house to house for miles around
That scattered settlement.

With country new and neighbors few,
'Tis then they're near in heart;
But thousands with but elbow room
Are many miles apart.

Chapter IX.

A WINTER NIGHT.

The ground was white ; the moon was bright ;
And jolly swains had come
To spend an evening with their friend
Within his sod-house home.
They talked and laughed while doing chores ;
They laughed and talked at tea ;
With jokes and pranks and stories went
The evening merrily.
By turns they took the musket out
And hid behind the feed-pile,
To shoot jackrabbits come to dine
Upon the sorghum seed-pile.
With telling wit and humor, and
With pathos in between,
Effectively a part of them
Could tell what they had seen.
Jim Simpson worked, the summer past,
In Colorado Springs,

A pretty town where little pug
To lordly fashion clings.
With gestures and sarcastic air,
While stoutly standing up,
'Twas thus he told the story of
A woman and her pup:

“When the day was calm and sunny
And the blossoms full of honey,
To the workmen it was funny
Then to see this queen of money
Starting out to take a walk,
All alone—with none to talk;
But she would lug
And tightly hug
Her little pug-
nose pup.

“Yet her home contained two other;
For this woman was a mother
Of a baby and its brother;
But her heart did nearly smother
Under such a load of gold.
Yes, her baby-love grew cold,
Till she would lug
And tightly hug
A little pug-
nose pup.

“Should this woman go a-riding
With her babies, then confiding
Friends would turn away deriding,
In deep shame their faces hiding;
For they'd say she's in a plight,
But acknowledge it was right
For her to lug
And tightly hug
Her little pug-
nose pup.

“Many modern lords are very
Careful that they never marry
Any woman who will carry
Children ; for they say ’twill bury
All their honor to be seen
With a woman—gentle queen —
If she won’t lug
And tightly hug
A little pug-
nose pup.”

Dan Fowler’s Story of Early Times in Central Kansas.

“In eighteen hundred seventy-three,
My parents started west to see
If they could find where land was free ;

“For Kansas then was on a boom ;
The crops were good, the flowers in bloom,
And Indians mostly in the tomb.

“In seventy-four, while on the claim,
Grasshoppers by the billions came,
Reversing many a settler’s aim.

“When troubles came, when hope had ceased,
One half the men their wagons greased,
Then loaded up and started east.

“But we were with the half which stayed
To see a farming country made
On lands where buffalo yet strayed.

“None fell a prey to famine’s clutch ;
But people’s like for game was such
That quails and rabbits suffered much.

“Next year tall grass grew on the hill ;
The people had fat hogs to kill,
And corn and wheat to take to mill.

“The rye grew very thick and tall ;
Potatoes grew enough for all ;
Then turnips, later in the fall.

“Tomatoes, lettuce, onions, beans,
Cucumbers, peas, and mustard greens
Made gardens smile with richest scenes.

“In spring wild berries came so quick ;
In summer, plums and grapes were thick ;
And walnuts grew along the creek.

“But nature’s smile was only part ;
For thorns must clothe the naked heart,
Before a poor man gets a start.

“Homesteaders’ teams were not the best ;
For wornout plugs must try the West.
In this the East was truly blest.

“Of fifty horses, five were sound.
Indeed, disease did much abound,
Diseases simple, complex, compound.

“ ’Twas ringbone, curb, or hoof-bound feet,
Too many bones, too little meat ;
While years alone were found complete ;

“Or hair too long, or hide too tight ;
Poll-evil, blindness, or failing sight,
While spring-halt made one foot too light.

“Stump-suckers to the fence rail clung ;
A fever oft was in the lung ;
While knees or ankles both were sprung.

“But such made only fun for me,
While passing on in boyhood glee
To years where other sights I see.

“Sometimes when heavy grass was dry,
The fires would start while winds were high,
And go like cyclones passing by.

"They blackened all things in their way ;
Burned scores of stables in a day,
With piles of corn and stacks of hay.

"A dirty place for human souls
To live, was in those 'dug-out' holes,
Just covered o'er with dirt and poles.

"The only planks were in the door ;
The walls were dirt and nothing more ;
And so, the damp, uneven floor.

"But cares wore fast on heart and brow,
When debts had taken team and plow,
Or taxes took the only cow.

"Yet cares were few and light for me,
While passing on in boyhood glee
To years where other sights I see.

"The house in which was taught our school,
Though very rough—to children cruel—
Was warm in winter, in summer cool.

"The floor was dirt ; so half the walls,
While half was made of logs quite small.
Of logs too tough for wedge and maul.

"The roof was boards with dirt on top,
Log frame beneath, then center prop
To hold it so it couldn't lop.

"The coarse slab benches had no backs ;
Their legs were poles dressed with an ax.
To sit there long was quite a tax.

"Not even shelves had been supplied ;
But on those benches long and wide,
The scholar's books lay by his side.

"But school days all made fun for me,
While passing on in boyhood glee,
To years where other sights I see.

“Our log-house home upon the hill,
Where children moved at parents’ will,
Was school when district schools were still.

“With ev’ry mind on knowledge bent,
And ev’ry one with books content,
Our evenings round the fire were spent.

“And when by memory I see
Those boyhood days which used to be,
It seems all things made fun for me.”

* * * * *

An altruistic theorist
Was Victor I. La Ray,
A rustic man who studied in
A simple sort of way.
Peculiar was the method used
In giving men his views.
His aim was ever to instruct;
Some thought it to amuse.
He said: “I have a funny story
I would like to read.”
To listen, Ned and all the others
Gladly then agreed.
He took a paper from the inner
Pocket of his coat,
And read this comic piece of verse
An eastern author wrote:

“Old Susan Kellum owned a cow
And lived in Germantown.
In selling milk, she found she must
Compete with neighbor Brown.
'Twas almost like starvation for
Herself and little Dick.
One day her boy came running in
And said: ‘Brown’s cow is sick.’

Then quickly came a twinkle in
Old Susan Kellum's eye ;
It seemed she wouldn't worry, though
Her neighbor's cow should die.

"Brown's customers began to come
To buy her milk and cream ;
She sold a pint to Doctor Smith.
A quart to Lawyer Beam ;
And Brown, himself, came over then
To buy a quart or so.
'Twas then that Susan tried her best
Strong sympathy to show,
But she couldn't hide the twinkle
In the corner of her eye.
'Twas plain she wouldn't dress in black,
Though Brown's old cow should die.

"She sold new milk, skimmed milk, and cream,
Sold all the cow would give ;
And little Dick and Susan Kellum
Then knew how to live.
A box must hold two sacks of flour,
The shed a ton of coal ;
Some apples in a coffee-sack ;
Potatoes in a hole.
And Susan had a twinkle in
The corner of her eye ;
It plainer grew when Brown had hung
His cow-hide out to dry.

"When our farmers have a crop
While old Russia suffers drought,
When a teacher gets a school
By shoving some one out,
When a workman gets a job
With a dozen standing by—
Oh this world is full of twinkles ;
Have you tried to find the why?

There are many twinkles twinkled
By those who have the pie,
Like the twinkles Susan twinkled
In the corner of her eye.

“But do not censure harshly,
Though many starve and die,
While others live in plenty, with
A twinkle in the eye;
But let us work together for
A better time that’s nigh,
When an honest man can live without
A twinkle in his eye;
When there won’t be twinkles twinkled
By those who have the pie,
Like the twinkles Susan twinkled in
The corner of her eye.”

That moonlight, winter night when swains
Had come to visit swain,
Ned’s little sod-house standing far
Upon the Western plain,
Was filled in early hours by
Much talk, much chatting gay;
But later in the night, the talk
Was in a sober way.
The conversation lasted till
The midnight hour was near;
And all had shared in talking but
The quiet Jack O’Lear.
Says Jim: “You know that Jack’s the singer;
Now we need a song,
For all are growing sleepy and
The hours growing long.”
Then others said: “Come, Jack, a song!”
“Some music, Jack, now quick!”
“We want the song you learned while working
Out at Clear Creek.”
Jack seeing now a good excuse,
Said with a timid shrug:

"I ought not sing that silver song,
For Ned's a good goldbug."
Then Ned arose good naturedly,
And slapped him on the back ;
Said : "I'm the man your song is for.
Come now, some music, Jack !"
So Jack began to clear his throat ;
Then gave a timid shrug ;
Then sang by rote this silver song,
To Ned, the good goldbug :

"It is sad and also funny
That a man who has no money,
Not a penny
For the many
Men whom he has begged to trust him.
Says 'free silver' does disgust him,
Thinks more money sure would bust him :
But admits
He has quit
Hearing silver dollars dingle.
Any coin when it is single,
With no other one to mingle,
Cannot jingle, jingle, jingle
In the pockets of the farmer,
In the purses of the toiler,
On the counters of the merchant.
White silver,
Bright silver—
Give us silver, silver, silver,
Free silver.

"Call the miner from his hovel :
Bring along your pick and shovel :
Tap the fountains
In the mountains ;
Start the streams of silver flowing ;
Start the bankrupt business going ;
Make the gold king stop his crowing :

Give him hints
That our mints
Make the silver dollars dingle.
Any coin when it is single,
With no other one to mingle,
Cannot jingle, jingle, jingle
In the pockets of the farmer,
In the purses of the toiler,
On the counters of the merchant.
White silver,
Bright silver—
Give us silver, silver, silver,
Free silver.

(The Future.)

“Men have lost their long devotion
To the lords across the ocean,
Who once ruled us,
Who once schooled us.
Many men are mining silver ;
Many are refining silver ;
Mints are coining shining silver.
Any man
Often can
Hear the silver dollars dingle ;
For no coin is longer single.
See them by the hundreds mingle ;
Hear them jingle, jingle, jingle
In the pockets of the farmer,
In the purses of the toiler,
On the counters of the merchant.
White silver,
Bright silver—
We have silver, silver, silver,
Free silver.”
Then all went home but singing Jack ;
He stayed o’er night with Ned.

The hours like minutes flew away.
When night had gone, Jack said :
“I’ve listened, and I half believe
The coyotes have a hen ;
Because I hear your leghorn rooster
Cackle now and then.”
Then out they went ; and all—

The far-extending plain was like
A peaceful sea of snow ;
The morn was clear ; the air was still ;
And mercury was low.
When Venus hid behind the dawn,
The sun was soon in view ;
Then suddenly the plain, a strange,
Delusive landscape grew ;
And truth took wings, but left delight ;
And though the eye
Then told a lie,
It was, indeed, a pleasing sight.

Across the west a range of hills
Arose ten miles away ;
And far along the north a smooth
Extensive valley lay ;
The towns and villages appeared
For twenty miles around,
With buildings thrice their real size
And some not touching ground ;
For truth took wings, but left delight ;
And though the eye
Then told a lie,
It was, indeed, a pleasing sight.

A neighbor’s sod-house came in sight,—
A palace nearly done ;
A cattle ranch stood on its edge
And faced the morning sun.
At other times the railway train
Was wholly hid from view ;

In sight in now alternately
From hill to valley flew ;
For truth took wings, but left delight ;
And though the eye
Then told a lie,
It was, indeed, a pleasing sight.

But suddenly the inter'sting
Delusion disappeared :
The ridges sank ; the valleys rose ;
The plain again was cleared
Of villages away from home,
Of trains far off the track,
Of cattle ranches out of shape,
Of palaces in black.
Again truth filled the morning light ;
The human eye
Then told no lie,
Yet one could see a pleasing sight.

Chapter X.

THE PASSING YEARS.

The first few years, Ned's land was farmed
As land in Illinois.

No one need tell him how to farm ;
He learned that when a boy.

He planned, or plowed, or planted from
The dawn till close of day :

He planned, or plowed, or planted as
The seasons rolled away.

Sometimes he raised a paying crop,
But often he would fail ;

Sometimes the West was Eden,
Sometimes 'twas drought or hail.

And then his plows grew rusty ;
Dry farming didn't pay ;

And grass hid all the furrows as
The seasons rolled away.

Not idle he, but often worked
Upon a ranch near by ;

Dehorning, branding, driving cattle ;
Cutting corn or rye ;

Or working in the sorghum patch,
Or making prairie hay.

'Twas hard he always labored as
The seasons rolled away.

Sometimes he worked the harvest through
In Kansas wheat-fields great,

Or gathered corn through autumn days
In fair Nebraska state,

Or chopped the pines that grew among
The rugged Rockies gray.

The hopes of youth still spurred him on,
Though seasons rolled away.

Chapter XI.

A TYPICAL SUMMER.

When the heart is needing cheering
From the ills of pioneering
 On the Plains,
There is nothing that is better
To relieve it from its fetter
 And its pains,

Than a pleasant summer morning,
With the sun of June adorning
 Landscapes round.
Then the air is clear and mellow,
And the sunlight falling yellow
 On the ground.

Then the grass on all the prairie,
As upon a lawn, is very
 Fresh and green ;
But 'tis freckled o'er with flowers,
Which the dashing summer showers
 Keep so clean.

From the spring a stream of water
Slowly trickles down the gutter
 'Mong the rushes ;
To his mate the dove is cooing—
Can't tell when to quit his wooing.
 In the bushes.

In the sandy brooklet brimming
Many speckled trout are swimming,
 In the light ;
While the catfish and the turtle
Swim near willow, plum, or myrtle, *
 Out of sight.

* A lowland shrub, erroneously called myrtle.

Where the stone from hills are cropping,
Many rabbits young are hopping,
All unheard ;
Where the creviced rocks are highest,
Dwells the hawk, for he's the shyest
Prairie bird.

To the plain so far from timber,
Redhead with his neck so limber,
Forth has come ;
And the gawky little plover
With his spindle-legged lover
Is at home.

To the plants that are exotic,
Wind and sun are quite despotic
Now and then ;
But with rain in early summer,
Both the new and oldest comer
Hope again.

Then the ground is moist and mellow,
And the rye-patch turning yellow
On the hill ;
Wheat and barley both are blooming ;
New-mown hay, the air perfuming
Near the rill.

'Tis not every year, but often
Pride of June lies in its coffin
In July.
Early hopes are badly shattered ;
And the people who were flattered
Stand and sigh.

When the summer heat increases,
And for weeks the moisture ceases—
When rain stops,—
Then when midday hour is nearing,
Southwest winds begin to seering
Growing crops.

After noon the wind is higher,
And the air is getting drier
 Ev'ry hour.

Skies above are growing hazy ;
And the people growing lazy,
 Sad, and sour.

'Gainst the house the wind keeps knocking ;
In the corner flies are flocking
 From the gale ;
Garden truck is badly wilted ;
And the tender weeds are tilted,
 Looking pale.

When the sun begins to lower,
Then the wind is slower, slower,
 Till it stops.
With the wind the heat decreases,
Till at night it wholly ceases
 Burning crops.

But this work is not completed :
Dry, hot winds are oft repeated
 Many days.
Like the fodder for the cattle,
Then the corn blades loudly rattle—
 Dead the maize.

Millet ceases growing taller ;
But instead 'tis getting smaller
 Ev'ry day.
Grass is whitish brown, and curly ;
Not the fresh, dark green of early
 June or May.

Then on Saturday homesteaders
Come from breaking plows and headers
 To the town.
In the stores and on the sidewalks,
Little groups with humbled pride talks :
 Things are brown.

One will soon begin to moving ;
One will go without first proving
 On his claim.
One will sow more wheat than ever—
“Idling soil so rich was never
 Nature’s aim.”

But the latter summer’s raining
Stops the people from complaining
 Of the drought.
He who poorly built his sod-house,
Finds it now a sloppy mud-house,
 In and out.

Lakelets all around are showing ;
Creeks are rivers swiftly flowing
 Down the plain ;
And the district overseer
Finds his road work looking queer
 Since the rain.

Soon another picture brightens
All the dreary land and lightens
 Many hearts.
Most of those, who, sorely grieving,
Were intent on quickly leaving,
 Fail to start.

Soon the prairies all are greener,
Herds of kine and horses cleaner,
 Fat and sleek.
Under skies as blue as sapphire,
Grows the broomcorn, sorghum, kaffir
 Rank and thick.

Latent are thy great resources,
Soil and hidden water courses,—
 Arid West !
Where the buffalo has flourished,
Millions there will yet be nourished
 On thy breast.

Chapter XII.

A STRAY CAT.

One winter eve cold winds were whistling loud ;
And o'er the sky was hung a heavy cloud.
Snowflakes were beating 'gainst the windowpane
Of Ned's sod shanty on the barren plain ;
With book he sat beside the fire and light,
As pleasantly as on a starry night.

He heard a scratch
About the latch,
Then listened near the cabin door,
Then opened wide the cabin door.
In came a cat !

Then "Hiss !" and off it scampered in the storm.
Ned went to reading, happy, snug, and warm :
And laughing freely at the cutting wit
Of Thackery, whose missiles often hit
The hollow vessels of the social state :
It takes both heads and hearts to make men great.

He heard a scratch
About the latch,
Then listened near the cabin door,
Then opened wide the cabin door.
In came a cat,
A timid cat !

Again the homeless kitty had to go,
In darkness plunging through the pelting snow.
With book Ned sat beside the fire and light,
And felt the worth of home on such a night ;
Yet half condemned for chasing off a stray,
As if 'twere on a sunny summer day.

He heard a scratch
About the latch,

Then listened near the cabin door,
Then opened wide the cabin door.
 In came a cat,
 A friendless cat,
A white and yellow spotted cat.

“Come, kitty, come!” this time it gladly heard.
Then leaping on the bed it loudly purred;
And louder, louder purred while running round;
A refuge from the storm at last was found.
To pity things that feel became delight
To Ned; because upon a stormy night
 He heard a scatch
 About the latch,
Then listened near the cabin door,
Then opened wide the cabin door
 For e’en a cat,
 A homeless cat,
A pretty, playful, spotted cat.

Chapter XIII.

THE SECOND EFFORT.

To School Again.

Since Ned first planned to go to college,
Many years had passed.
He often thought: "I'll go next year."
He did succeed at last.
At first 'twas quite embarrassing
To him, he'd been so long
Where surging crowds were never known;
'Twas strange to see such throng.
All students seemed so distant, cold;
A few professors gruff
Reminded him of railroad times
With Irish bosses rough.
Ned soon began to sighing for
The freedom of the Plain,
And secretly to wishing
That he were there again.

Out of Money.

'Twas then his essay teacher,
A pretty innocent maid,
Told all the pupils in the class
That she'd refuse to grade
An essay that was written
On any kind of note,
Except the kind the faculty
Had ordered by their vote.
She held the fancy paper up
And told the class to look;
And then Ned felt the crushing weight
Of an empty pocketbook.

He fretted and he worried, and
He worried and he thought:
“A quarter’s worth of paper with
A nickel can’t be bought.”
So he worried and he fretted and
He worried and he thought:
“A quarter’s worth of paper with
A nickel can’t be bought.”
Unwillingly he ventured
To use another kind,
Some cheaper sheets he’d had a year,
But then was glad to find.
He knew the work in essay couldn’t
Less than zero be,
Not thinking that another way
Would come the penalty.
So when she held Ned’s essay up
And told the class to look,
Again he felt the crushing weight
Of an empty pocketbook.

A Glimpse of the Beautiful.

Soon a brighter day was dawning ;
Ned was ’neath a painted sky ;
Lectures quickly caught his ear ; the
Grand museum caught his eye.

Choral classes sent their music
Through the corridor and hall ;
And piano tones were rolling
Up the spacious college wall.

Recitations lost their terror,
As his love for teachers grew ;
And acquaintance made of students
Many friends both kind and true.

When the clouds would cross the heavens,
They displayed the richest hue ;
When the sun had made them vanish,
Skies were left in deepest blue.

When the wind began to blowing,
There was music in the breeze ;
When the sun was 'neath the hilltops,
Stars were gleaming through the trees.

When the earth was wrapped in darkness,
Then the keen electric light
Drew a pretty pencil picture
On the blackness of the night.

In the Library.

Library, oh regal treasure !
Rich in profit, rich in pleasure.
Ned soon found that volumes in it
Stole each vacant hour and minute.
Once he sat—a book was lying
In his hand—with thoughts fast flying
Through his mind, of something higher,
Unknown something, something higher.
All around him books were standing ;
And he felt his soul expanding ;
And he felt his soul aspire
To the unknown something higher.
Through a cloud the sun came gleaming :
Then as if from pleasant dreaming,
He awoke from meditation,
Looking outward on creation.
Earth was still, 'neath winter's whiteness,
Sleeping warm 'neath winter's brightness.
Snow-capped roofs in sunlight glimmered ;
Curling smoke from chimneys shimmered
Through a thousand pathways mazy
To a sky of silver—hazy.

Trees were fair as fairy maiden,
With the snow were heavy laden.
In the pines with branches bending,
Green and white were richly blending.
From a twig a birdie's twitter
Caused the snow to fall and glitter ;
In the snow its music simple
Left a trace by mark and dimple.
Toward the sun a lakelet chosen
For athletics, lay unfrozen.
Stillness made it clearer, clearer,
Till it grew a perfect mirror.
O'er the silent waters sleeping,
Many leaning trees were peeping
In to see, with smile and ditty,
If their winter suits were pretty.

Ned's Flying of Short Duration.

While thus he sat with volumes standing
Thickly all around,
With beauty shining ev'rywhere,
In sky and o'er the ground,
His roommate dropped a letter in
Ned's open, idle book.
A letter always made him glad,
And when a glancing look
Revealed a faithful debtor's name,
He felt a pleasing thrill ;
But this he found, and not
The looked for fifty-dollar bill :
"Dear Sir : I'm broke ; my broomcorn sold
At twenty-three per ton.
My crop was good ; but better far
Are those who planted none.
I cannot pay ; I'm not to blame,
But much I pity you.
I never had a better hand
To work the summer through."

Next morning when the roll was called,
No voice from Ned was heard ;
His seat was vacant ; such a thing
Had ne'er before occurred.
And when a student answered :
"Mr. Sanders left the school,"
'Twas then the teacher quickly struck
His name from off the roll.

And few again heard the name of Ned,
And few again ever thought of Ned,
And no one knew what became of Ned,
As the school went busily on.
And no one knew of the tears he shed,
And no one knew of the hopes that fled,
And no one knew of the heart that bled,
As the school went merrily on.

Chapter XIV.

A BRIGHTER SIDE.

Many states have heard the stories
Of the droughts in arid West ;
So reports are often doubted
When the country's at its best.
Business then is strictly business—
Rush and push in store and shop—
When the price of wheat is rising
And the farmers have a crop.

There are wheat stacks by the hundred
Scattered o'er the level plain,
Steamers puffing, threshers humming,
Many wagons hauling grain.
Money there from many countries—
Ev'ry thing is at the top,
When the price of wheat is rising
And the farmers have a crop.

Chapter XV.

THE OTHER COUSIN.

Success.

By many years of study, Will
 Had won a worthy name.
His early hopes were realized :
 His college honors came,—
A prize in oratory and
 Another in debate,
A class address Commencement Day,—
 A college graduate.

In school the many studies
 Gave him many worlds of thought.
In history, the greatest world,
 Was where his mind most wrought.
It showed a stage of players, clear
 From Babylon to Rome :
From Rome, extending westward past
 His Illinois home.

And men of other ages, who
 Long since in graves were hurled,
Are living actors on this stage
 That reaches round the world.
'Twas Man, the actor, Will, the student.
 Liked to read about :
Man, Man ! the greatest study, one
 Can find in school or out.

Will studied dead men living, and
 He studied living dead.
Because so much he studied Man,
 His heart kept growth with head.

He studied economic thought,
Read many volumes through ;
And ev'ry day he studied Man,
His heart more tender grew.

A Doleful Song.

Will saw the miner in the mine,
Mechanic in the shop ;
He saw the plowman plow and sow
And gather in the crop.
In the spring, in the autumn, in sunny June,
When the days were short, when the days
were long,
So many were singing this doleful tune,
So many were singing this doleful song :

In the garden where Eve
Was so quick to believe
A lie by the ruler of Hades,
The good Lord did declare
That no man anywhere
Could spend all his time in the shade.
But some, this law don't suit.
While the masses hard are working,
Then a few are always shirking,
And in shady places lurking,
To get the richest fruit.
So we toil, toil, toil
Till our bones need oil ;
That our big rich neighbor
May be free from labor."

Will often saw the unemployed
Workmen on the street.
He read their lives—an open book
In primer type complete.
In the spring, in the autumn, in sunny June,

When the days were short, when the days
 were long,
Their lives were singing this doleful tune ;
 Their lives were singing this doleful song :
 "'Tis the panic has spread
 Until business is dead ;
One half our employers are broke ;
 And the banks has shut down
 On all cash in our town,
The costliest kind of a joke.
 Ten jobs for twenty men !
Half the spindles ceased their turning ;
Half the lights have ceased their burning ;
Half the men have lost their earning ;
 How can we find work then ?
We must tramp, tramp, tramp,
Till in graves we cramp ;
We can't labor, labor, labor
For our big rich neighbor."

Professor Sanders.

A few years passed ; Will Sanders held
 The chair of history
And economics in an eastern
 University.
When one successful year was o'er,
 His business couldn't wait ;
But called him to his boyhood home,
 To settle the estate.

'Twas here his mind reverted to
 His loving cousin Ned.
The clover in the pasture where
 So many cattle fed,
The orchard, river, wood, and mill,
 The birds so happy wed,
All spoke or sang of boyhood and
 His loving cousin Ned.

“I hear that Ned is living yet
Upon the Kansas plain,
Where crops so often fail because
Of wind and lack of rain.
And I must go to see him in
His little western home.
I’ll write today and tell him when
To look for me to come.”

The day Will reached the place to take
The stage, to leave the train,
He didn’t find as he had thought
A barren windy plain.
The sky was blue; the sun was bright;
The air was still, yet free;
And June had spread a carpet green
As far as man could see.

But soon the driver hinted that
It wasn’t always so;
And said, “A tenderfoot had better
Go a little slow.”
The sweetest prairie flower was
The cactus in the grass.
This song Will’s heart kept singing to
The cactus in the grass:

“Little pin-cushion cactus
So near by the road;
Little pin-cushion cactus,
Stay here by the road.

“Little pin-cushion cactus
Close down in the grass;
Little pin-cushion cactus,
A crown in the grass.

“Little pin-cushion cactus,
Red bloom among thorns;
Little pin-cushion cactus,
Perfume among thorns.

“Little pin-cushion cactus,
Is seen on the Plains ;
Little pin-cushion cactus,
A queen on the Plains.”

Will's Philosophy.

The visit o'er, Will took the train—
The day again was mild—
And started for his eastern home
To meet his wife and child.
A happy man, a happy man ;
The day again was mild ;
The train was swiftly taking him
To meet his wife and child.

Will sat beside the window as
The train was speeding way,
And gazing at the smiling plain,
The beauty of the day ;
Yet thinking of his loving wife,
His child with rich locks curled,—
The dearest wife, the sweetest child
In all the wide, wide world.

But now and then another picture
Flashed across his mind,
A picture of his cousin Ned
So lately left behind.
“I see him in his boyhood years ;
I see him in his youth,
With ardent thirst for usefulness,
A symbol fair of truth.

“Again a simple hearted man
In poverty I see ;
No wife to comfort and to cheer,
No child upon his knee ;

Excessive toil and lack of school
Has badly dwarfed his mind ;
Yet happier than if he knew
How narrow he's confined.

"I've studied men for many years ;
I've read their lives with care.
My observation bids me this
Important truth declare :
It takes two things to make a man ;
First, self-activity ;
No less important is the second,
Opportunity.

"Ned had the first the same as I :
The second was denied.
Misfortune's wave has buried him—
He sank beneath the tide.
Philanthropists in ev'ry land
Some day will teach this truth :
A chance for life, society
Must give to helpless youth.

"'Twill lead humanity to higher
Planes than we have trod,
And pay an honest debt men owe
Posterity and God.
Political economy
Must wear a newer gown ;
Must clothe itself in ethics,
Lay its tattered garments down ;

"Must look for all the rights of man ;
Not weary men with 'Trade' ;
Must help repeal the 'Iron Law',
For such in sin is made."—
Thus speeding to his loving wife,
His child with rich locks curled ;
The dearest wife, the sweetest child
In all the wide, wide world.

Chapter XVI.

HUNTING WORK.

Two hundred miles away from home,
Rich farms on ev'ry side,
The wheat in stack, the cornfields green
Extending far and wide ;
With weary limbs and blistered feet,
With heartaches over-run,
Ned sat beneath a cottonwood
To shelter off the sun.

"Dam'd bum, you wouldn't work if you had
work."—

These words too vile for paper white,
Too black to write with ink,
Were hurled at Ned, that day, by one
Who didn't feel nor think.
Ned thought how many weary miles
He'd tramped from town to town.
This epithet so vile, he now
Must bear for sitting down,—

- For stopping while the burning sun
Was sinking in the west,
For stopping while his aching heart
And limbs were taking rest.
And soon hot tears were streaming o'er
His sun-tanned, dusty face,—
An honest man in search of work
Now feeling deep disgrace.

And then he started down the lane
And stopped beside a brook,
To wash the dust and tears away—
Drive off the wretched look.

A wagon rattled down the road ;
The driver hallooed out :
"Say, Stranger, don't you wan't a job?
I see you're big and stout."

So many, many times had Ned
Inquired or asked for work,
That when he'd ask, a cloud of fears
Would all around him lurk.
His heart would sicken, while his face
Would redder grow with shame ;
And e'en a look would censure him,
Would load him down with blame.

O happy man ! that evening when
A driver hallooed out :
"Say, Stranger, don't you want a job?
I see your're big and stout."
Those simple words had driven clouds
Of deep despair away,
Brought thrills of joy, and ushered in
Another shining day.

And Ned began to cutting corn
With seven other men.
The corn was thick ; the workmen couldn't
Understand it when
They saw the stranger cut his row
And keep so far ahead.
All wondered why he worked so hard ;
All wondered why, but Ned.

And this is why he cut so fast :
He now and then would think
Of those vile words, too vile to speak,
Too black to write with ink.
And ev'ry time he thought of them
His walking faster grew ;
And ev'ry time he thought of them
His cornknife faster flew.

He kept his job for many weeks,
Till autumn work was done.
Of bitter days in hunting work,
He often spoke with fun.
With fifty dollars in his purse
One bright November morn,
A cheerful man, he started home,
He left the fields of corn.

Chapter XVII.

A LETTER FROM FATHER AND MOTHER.

“Our only Son, Our loving Son :
Your letter came today.
We’re glad to hear that you are well
And back at home to stay.
You wrote of friends and neighbors old,
That you would like to see ;
There’s some are rich and live in town,
And some are poor as we.

“You well remember how we managed
Bad and got in debt.
And but for that, our son would ’been
A living with us yet.
Or if you’d rather gone to town,
Then we’d have gone there too.
We’ll worry not, but live in hope
We yet may live with you.

“Unless the slough is miry or
Unless we have a load,
We never pass our dear old home ;
We take another road :

Red apples in the window and
A boy upon the street,—
They always make him hungry when
He knows he cannot eat.

“We’ve thought and talked a month or more
Of something hard to do :
To write and see if we could get
A little cash from you.
Your mother isn’t very well ;
We’ve had the doctor come ;
And year by year the rent has grown
To be a larger sum.

“But if you cannot send it, we
Will love you just the same.
We lost our home ; that drove you off ;
’Tis we who are to blame.
So do not worry ; let us hope
We’ll sometime own another,
And then our only son can live
With father and with mother.”

Chapter XVIII.

NED'S ANSWER.

“Dear Parents: I’m so sad to hear
That mother isn’t well;
I fear that she may have another
Long and weakly spell.
I’m glad to send you money now,
A hundred-dollar note,
A noble gift from cousin Will,
He sent when last he wrote.

“He said he hoped that I would plan
To go to school again;
I told him I was sure to go,
But couldn’t tell just when.
Another thing my cousin wrote,
Which made me cry with joy:
‘I owe a debt to you, dear Ned,
For kindness when a boy.’

“Dear parents, you remember well
The little testament,
You gave me on the parting day,
When first from home I went.
I carry it where e’er I go,
And read it o’er and o’er;
Though many leaves are worn and brown,
I love it more and more.

“I never yet have told you that
My lungs are growing weak;
It’s hard for me to think about,
And harder yet to speak.
I’ve slept out doors in weather cold,
Much wheat I’ve pitched through dust:
With proper care, my lungs will soon
Grow strong again, I trust.

“Dear parents, do not blame yourselves
Because I'm not with you ;
If I had managed well, then rich
My home, you in it too.
'Round here the men who manage well,
Whose deeds are more than words,
Have homes with fields and gardens,
Pastures wide with flocks and herds.

“I had as good a chance as Will,
Could learn as fast as he ;
But he is far above me now ;—
The fault is all with me.
If I had only stayed in school
Instead of working out,—
But why reflect ; henceforth I'll
Manage well, no doubt.

“I've heard from Colorado where
There's work that one can do ;
And so I'll leave my home again,
Not stay the winter through.
The avalanche came down the mountain
Side with crash and crack ;
For miles debris and snow have buried
Deep the railroad track.

“Tonight I'll take a west bound train
And have a pleasant ride ;
Tomorrow I'll be shov'ling snow
Along the mountain side.
Next Sunday I shall write again
And give you my address.
With love, goodbye. Let's ever live
In hope and happiness.”

Chapter XIX.

SLEEPING IN A FREIGHT-CAR.

Before the sun had sunk behind the cliff,
Ned's heart had failed ; his limbs were growing
stiff.

Clothes wet and freezing, then he worked no more ;
And then with blankets round him on the floor,
Lying in a freight-car,
Lying in a freight-car
On the mountain side.

Alone, no fire, in cold and shivering,
He lay with heart and lip both quivering.
With deadly phlegm, his lungs were filling fast ;
And slower, slower, slower minutes passed,—
Weeping in a freight-car,
Weeping in a freight-car
On the mountain side.

The toilers kindly watched him through the night ;
His mind oft took a strange delirious flight ;
At times he asked them if 'twas night or day ;
And thus he wore the tardy hours away,
Moaning in a freight-car,
Moaning in a freight-car
On the mountain side.

These words, "I'm going back to school again,"
He spoke, but none knew what he meant ; and then,
"My head !—oh mother, help !—I cannot breathe !"
And thus he lay with wretched bed beneath,
Dying in a freight-car,
Dying in a freight-car
On the mountain side.

Before the moon had sunk behind the cliff,
Ned's heart was still, his limbs were cold and stiff.
His dear old parents many miles away
Knew not of Ned, their only son, that day,
 Sleeping in a freight-car,
 Sleeping in a freight-car
On the mountain side.

THE END.

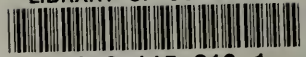




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